

[*And say : My Lord ! Increase me in knowledge.—Qur'ân*]

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SOME ASPECTS OF BAHMANĪ CULTURE

THE empire of the Bahmanīs, along with its subordinate states, may be regarded as the connecting link between two great centripetal tendencies, that of the Khiljīs and Tughluqs and that of the Mughals. It was the direct result of the great expansion which the sultanate of Delhi had attained in the time of 'Alāu'd-dīn Khiljī, Quṭbu'd-dīn Mubārak Shāh Khiljī, and Muḥammad bin Tughluq, by the conquest not only of the plateau of the Deccan but even of the far South. Muḥammad bin Tughluq tried to make a sort of compromise between centripetal and centrifugal tendencies by the establishment of two capitals, one the traditional capital at Delhi and another, the central capital, at Daulatābād,[1] but this proved to be unworkable, and with the abandonment of Daulatābād the centrifugal tendencies again became strong, ending in the disruption of the empire even in the time of its greatest ruler, Muḥammad bin Tughluq, and the setting up of the new kingdom of the Deccan.

The history of the Bahmanī dynasty may be divided into two distinct epochs, indicated respectively by the Gulbarga and the Bīdar periods. There is a great difference in the character of the two epochs, and what happened in 1433 was not merely a change of capital from one town to another but a change in the very basis of government. The period during which Gulbarga, which soon took the place of Daulatābād, was the capital of the new state and the centre of the new culture, was entirely formative in character, and the ruler had not only to make his position secure from within but to fight external enemies as well. The ambition of the first Bahmanī, 'Alā'ud-dīn Ḥasan Bahman Shāh, knew no bounds, for he wished not only to suppress the insurrections which were instigated mostly by the agents of the sulṭān of Delhi but even to conquer the whole

1. "*Second capital at Daulatābād*"—For this topic see Mahdi Ḥusain, *Rise and Fall of Muḥammad bin Tughluq*, London, 1938, pp. 108 ff.; Browne, *Some Phases of the Character and Policy of Muḥammad bin Tughluq*, Journal of the U.P. Historical Society, June 1918, p. 12; *Maṭlūbu'ṭ-Ṭālibīn*, India Office MSS. 653, quoted by Mahdi Ḥusain, pp. 113, 114; 'Abdu'l-tāh el Makkī: *Ẓafaru'l Wālih*, III, 863.

of the erstwhile Tughluq dominions.[1] The second of the line, Muḥammad I,[2] further strengthened the kingdom by his administrative innovations, while Mujāhid[3] reformed the army especially by the greater use which he made of the new weapon, gunpowder, which had made its way into the Bahmanī army as early as his father Muḥammad I's reign."[4] Mujāhid was murdered by his uncle Dāwūd,[5] but the latter did not live long and was succeeded by Muḥammad II (who is wrongly called Maḥmūd I by Firishta),[6] and this king's reign is marked by the great impetus he

1. 'Alāu'd-dīn Ḥasan Bahman Shāh ascended the throne according to the contemporary 'Iṣāmī (*Futūḥu Salāṭīn*, ed. Mahdi Ḥusain, Agra, 1938, p. 525), followed by Firishta, *Gulshan-i-Ibrāhīmī*, on Friday, 24-6-748 H. With this evidence *Burhān-i-Ma'āṣir's* 8-8-748 H., cannot be credited. The date of the accession of his successor as given by *Bur.*, *viz.*, 758 H. is also obviously wrong ; the only other date that we have is that given by *Fir.*, *i.e.*, 1-3-759 H. Bahman Shāh, therefore, reigned for 10 years 8 months and 5 days, which is less by about 4 months than the 11 years 2 months and 7 days given by *Bur.*, and *Ṭabaqāt-i-Akbarī* as the duration of his reign. This, however, cannot be helped since *Bur.* is not exact as to the date of his accession and is obviously inaccurate about the date of the accession of his successor, while *Ṭab.*, does not give the date either of his or his successor's accession. We may, therefore, take it that 'Alā'ud-dīn Bahman Shāh ascended the throne on 24-4-748/3-8-1347 and died on 1-3-759/11-2-1358.

2. Muḥammad I ascended the throne on 1-3-759/11-2-1358. He reigned according to *Bur.*, for 17 years or 18 years 7 months (*Ṭab.*, is obviously wrong with its 13 years). His successor ascended the throne according to *Fir.*, on 19-10-776/23-3-1375. He therefore reigned for 17 years 7 months and 8 days, which comes midway between *Burhān's* two periods.

3. Mujāhid—For the date of accession and death of this king see Venkataramanayya, *Mujāhid Shāh Bahmanī*, Indian History Congress, Hyderabad Session, where he rightly considers Firishta's dates, *i.e.*, 19-10-776/23-3-1375—17-12-779/15-4-1378 to be correct.

4. *Gunpowder in India*—We find a regular department of " Ātishbārī " as early as 767/1366, when 300 gun-carriages were employed in the siege of Adōnī by Muḥammad I ; *Fir.*, I, 290. This was many decades before 'Abdu'r-Razzāq's mention of pyrotechny at Vijayanagar, and nearly forty years before the Chinaman Mahaun saw firearms in Bengal in 1406 ; see Gode, *Use of Guns and Gunpowder in India*, Denison Ross Commemoration Volume, Poona, 1939, p. 117 ff.

5. Dāwūd—Only *Fir.*, gives the date of his accession, 17-12-799/15-4-1378. *Fir.*, says that he reigned for one month and five days while *Ṭab.*, has one month and three days. This would fix the date of his death as 22-1-780 H. or 24-1-780 H. We know that Dāwūd was murdered while offering his Friday prayers and 22-1-780/21-5-1378 was a Friday, so we can consider that date to be the end of his reign.

6. The genealogy and even the name of Muḥammad II is wrongly given by *Fir.*, as Maḥmūd s/o 'Alā'ud-dīn Bahman Shāh. Muḥammad was really a grandson and not a son of the first Bahmani. For a discussion *see* Sherwānī, *Maḥmūd Gāwān, the Great Bahmanī Wazīr*, pp. 56-57. Accession date, as above, 22-1-780/21-5-1378. Reigned according to *Fir.*, for 19 years 9 months and 20 days and according to *Ṭab.*, 19 years 9 months and 24 days. But both *Fir.*, and *Ṭab.*, are definite that the next king Ghiyāthu'd-dīn ascended the throne on 21-7-799 H. or 7-7-799 H., and *Ṭab.*, has that he reigned for 1 month and 20 days, which makes his deposition to be in Ramaḍān 799 H., while the next incumbent's succession date, as given by *Fir.*, *Bur.*, and *Ṭab.*, happens to be the 17th Ramaḍān 799, one of the few definitely fixed dates in the whole genealogy. We may therefore infer the following :

Muḥammad II ..22-1-788/21-5-1378—21-7-799/20-4-1397;
Ghiyāthu'd-dīn ..21-7-799/20-4-1397—17-9-799/14-6-1397;
Shamsu'd-dīn Dāwūd II acc. 17-9-799/14-6-1397.

Shamsu'd-dīn Dāwūd II reigned for 5 years and 7 months both according to *Fir.*, and *Bur.* So we may put his successor Fīrōz's accession as being on 24-2-800 H., which corresponds with *Bur.'s* " Ṣafar 800," and definitely with *Ṭab.'s* 24-2-800/17-11-1397.

gave to the spread of learning in the kingdom and the early contact with the savants of countries bordering on India. Muḥammad's is a peaceful reign, during which the Deccan was blessed by contentment and the spread of knowledge and culture. The period following Muḥammad, however, proved to be one of the darkest in the annals of the Deccan, for his three successors, Ghiyāthu'd-dīn, Shamsu'd-dīn and Fīrōz,[1] were either murdered or deposed, and it was perhaps in order to change the whole bloodthirsty atmosphere thus prevalent in the court at Gulbarga that Aḥmad I [2] changed his capital to the fertile and fruitbearing Bīdar, which even now boasts one of the finest climates in H.E.H. the Nizam's Dominions.

Passing over to the Bīdar period, we immediately see how, except for the perennial conflict between the descendants of the colonists from Delhi and Upper India and the new immigrants from Persia and overseas the conflict, that is to say, between the so-called " Deccanīs " and the " Āfāqīs," the Old-Comers and the New-Comers,[3] there is an orderly government and orderly succession to the throne. Aḥmad is succeeded by his son ' Alā'ud-dīn Aḥmad II, who in turn gives place to the much maligned Humāyūn, followed by Niẓāmu'd-dīn Aḥmad III, and Shamsu'd-dīn Muḥammad III.[4] Except for a series of insurrections by a pretender to the throne in the time of Humāyūn, which he put down first with the new policy of compromise and then with a firm hand, the succession to the throne was as peaceful as possible and was notably different

1. Fīrōz acceded to the throne on 24-2-800/17-11-1397 and reigned according to *Ṭab.* for 25 years 7 months and 11 days, which takes us to 4-10-825 H. and which nearly corresponds with 5-10-825/22-9-1421 on which *Fir.*, *Bur.*, and *Ṭab.* are all agreed as being the date of his successor's accession.

2. Shihābu'd-dīn Aḥmad I ascended the throne on 5-10-825/22-9-1421 and reigned up to 28-7-837/3-3-1434 which is less than *Ṭab.*'s date, 20-7-837 H., by only 8 days and may be regarded as approximately correct. The change of the capital to Bīdar was affected in 833/1430 according to *Fir.*, I, 324, but an inscription recently found on clearing the debris of the Solha Khambh Mosque in the Bīdar Fort says that the mosque was built in 827/1424 by the king's favourite son, Prince Muḥammad, after whom Bīdar was renamed Muḥammadābād, see *Epigraphia Indo-Moslemica*, 1931-32, p. 27.

3. For the history of this question see *Maḥmūd Gāwān, op. cit.*, pp. 61-71.

4. 'Alā'ud-dīn Aḥmad II, Humāyūn, Niẓāmu'd-dīn Aḥmad III, Muḥammad III—Counting backwards we find with plausible certainty that Muḥammad III died in the first week of Ṣafar 887/March 1482 (1st according to *Fir.*, and 5th according to *Bur.*) while both *Fir.* and *Bur.* are agreed that he ascended the throne on 13-11-867/31-7-1463. The date of accession of his predecessor Niẓāmu'd-dīn Aḥmad III is given by *Fir.* as 28-11-865/7-9-1461, and by *Bur.* just one day earlier, which would make his reign extend to 1 year 11 months and 15 or 16 days. This may be said to correspond to *Bur.*'s estimate of 2 years 10 months and 14 days, while *Fir.*'s 2 months 1 day and *Ṭab.*'s 11 months and 2 days are obvious mistakes.

Now in footnote 2 we have seen that Shihābu'd-dīn Aḥmad I reigned up to 28-7-837/3-3-1434. His son 'Alā'ud-dīn Aḥmad II was on the throne for 23 years 9 months and 2 days according to *Fir.*, and 23 years 9 months according to *Ṭab.* He must therefore have died on 28th or 30th Rabī' II (not Jamādī II as given by *Bur.*), 862 H. corresponding to 7-3-1457. Taking this date to be that of Ḥumāyūn's successor Aḥmad III's accession, we find that Ḥumāyūn must have reigned 3 years 6 months and 28 days, which comes very near the duration of his reign as given by *Fir.* and 3 years 6 months and 5 days as given by

(*Continued on p. 28*).

from the murderous policy of the pretenders and successors to the throne in the case of the Gulbarga Bahmanīs.

There is one other difference between the Gulbarga and the Bidar sultanates. The rule of the earlier Bahmanīs was marked by the great learning of some of the rulers themselves, and the sulṭāns at Gulbarga made their mark in the world of oriental knowledge. This is perhaps not so in the case of most of the Bīdar sulṭāns who were all matter-of-fact persons with a strong inclination towards the sword rather than towards the pen. The Bīdar sultanate was distinguished by the presence of a great administrator, Malik Saifu'd-dīn Ghōrī, who was the creator of Bahmanī administration and who lived through five reigns, dying at the advanced age of 107, one day after the death of Muḥammad II, on April 20th, 1397. The colleague of 'Alā'ud-dīn Ḥasan Bahman Shāh, the father-in-law of Muḥammad I, and the prime-minister of three other sulṭāns, Ghōrī not only steered the ship of state through smooth as well as rough waters but actually laid down the principles of sound government for the guidance of his sovereign in his brochure, the *Naṣā'iḥu'l-Mulūk*. This short but illuminating pamphlet treats, among other things, of the qualities necessary in a good ruler, and in his prime-minister and other ministers, of the worth of counsel in political matters of the duties of civil and military officers, and of general principles of administration.[1]

The Bīdar period was, however, not so blessed by ministers of outstanding merit till the advent of Maḥmūd Gāwān on the political stage. The " ifs " of history are always interesting though perhaps they lead us nowhere, and it is well worth pondering whether the Bahmanī kingdom would have lasted even so long as it did if the great personalities of Humāyūn's widow, Makhdūma-i-Jahān and that of Maḥmūd Gāwān had not propped it up with all their integrity, far-sightedness and influence.

On the establishment of the new dynasty, the Deccan was cut off from the North by the iron wall of political independence, and it was almost a foregone conclusion that it should get its inspiration direct from

(*Continued from p.* 27)

Ṭab. Bur.'s 6 months and 5 days is obviously a mistake for 3 years 6 months and 5 days. We come to the following conclusions :—

Chronology of the earlier Bīdar Sulṭāns up to Muḥammad III.

'Alā'ud-dīn Aḥmad II	..28-7-837/3-3-1434—29-4-862/7-3-1457 ;
Ḥumāyūn	..29-4-862/7-3-1457—28-11-865/7-9-1461 ;
Niẓāmu'd-dīn Aḥmad III	..28-11-865/7-9-1461.13-11-867/31-7-1463 ;
Shamsu'd-dīn Muḥammad III	..13-11-867/31-7-1463—5-2-887/27-3-1482.

1. Unfortunately I have only been able to lay my hand on a translation of the *Naṣā'iḥ*, one by 'Abdu'l-Ghaffār Khān of Malkāpūr included in his *Tadhkira Ṣalāṭin-i-Dakan*, pp. 75-82, who says that his original Persian copy was lost in the floods of the Mūsī river of Hyderabad, and although it is difficult to judge the genuineness of the authorship from a mere translation, in the absence of any evidence to the contrary we may well regard the work as coming from the pen of Malik Saifu'd-dīn Ghorī, to whom it has been ascribed.

Persia and overseas. It must be pointed out here that the Persia of the 14th or 15th century was the centre of a great Aryo-Semitic culture, which was then taking the place of the purely Semitic civilisation once the basis of the caliphate. For it was during these centuries that decentralisation had set in the 'Abbasid caliphate, and Persian and Turkish dynasties like the Buwaihids, the Ḥamdānids, the Ghaznavids and the Seljūqids were establishing their sway in the far-flung corners of the realm of Baghdād and by turns completely overpowering its effete edifice. It was these dynasties that became great centres of culture, and the cultural influence which these centres exercised on the Deccan was considerable.

In spite of this, those who set up the Bahmanī kingdom originally came from the North, and it was only natural that they should have brought great traditions along with them in the matter of political institutions, nomenclature of officials, coinage, and even architecture. The influence of the North is evidenced by some of the royal tombs at Gulbarga, specially the tombs of the first two Bahmanī sulṭāns. 'Alā'ud-dīn's tomb is a very simple, modest structure, the mortuary chamber being 40½ feet square built on a platform about 4 ft. in height. The dome is flat shaped in the traditional Tughluq style, while the walls have a definite slope towards the base. The finials and the bouquets on the four corners are reminiscent of the contemporary Delhi tradition, while the doorways are wider at their base than near the springers, suggesting how the architect has counteracted his thrust of the dome. Muḥammad I's tomb is built more or less in the same style but is even smaller than his father's, measuring only 26 feet square.[1]

The first sulṭān of the Deccan, 'Alā'ud-dīn Ḥasan Bahman Shāh, was a man of iron will, yet it is remarkable that he never showed the slightest tinge of cruelty in his dealings with the partisans of the Tughluq faction or with the Hindu rāyas and muqaddams against whom he had to struggle. He went one step forward and abolished the levy of the Jizyah, a tax really meant for the protection of the non-Muslims but which had become an eye-sore to the Hindu subjects of the sulṭān.[2] The Hindu chiefs of the Deccan were so much reconciled that when the king decided to marry his son Muḥammad to Malik Saīfu'd-dīn Ghōrī's daughter in June 1351, the rāyas of Kaulās, Shakarkhorā and Mudgal were invited as his honoured guests.[3]

We are not told of the repast that was provided to the royal guests, Hindu and Muslim, who gathered together on that great occasion, but fortunately we have the menu of another royal banquet provided by the Wazīr Khwāja-i-Jahān at Gulbarga on the occasion of the progress of the

1. Report of *Hyderabad Archæological Department*, 1925-26, pp. 1 and 2.

2. Sherwānī, *Establishment of the Bahmanī Kingdom*, Journal of Indian History, December 1941. Jizyah; 'Abdu'l-Jabbār, *op. cit.*, 121, quoting *Mulḥiqāt-i Ṭabaqāt-i Nāṣirī* by 'Ainu'd-dīn Bījāpurī, a contemporary of the first Bahmanī sulṭān.

3. *Fir.*, I, 278.

sulṭān to quell a rebellion at Sāgar. It was exactly an eighth part of the day when the trumpeters announced that the banquet was ready. Silk tapestries were spread for table-cloths and bread was distributed on them evenly. Then came roasts of various kinds, curry puffs, cooked vegetables, raw celery and salad, along with big and small game as well as curries in gravy, while " wet and dry sweets " and ḥalvās were provided to finish with. The meal ended with the distribution of betel leaves and the presentation of the nobles and leaders of the army to the royal guests.[1]

The reign of Muḥammad Shāh I was a period of what may be called the organising and centralising of the kingdom, and the hand of the sulṭān may be seen in military as well as civil reforms, the division of the kingdom into provinces, and the renaming of the great officer of state. The first Bahmanī had, in a way, risen from the ranks, and in order to keep his former equals in their proper places it was necessary to hedge round the sulṭān with a certain amount of dignity and prestige. Muḥammad was the man for this, and he was fully prepared to take advantage of the beautiful ebony throne presented to him by the rāya of Tilangānā. This Takht-i Fīrōzā or Turquoise Throne measured 9 × 6 ft., and was inlaid with priceless jewels to such an extent that the original black ebony was covered with jewels from end to end. It was called turquoise Throne because originally it was covered with enamel of a turquoise colour.[2] Muḥammad Shāh II used to hold a durbar on all week-days except Fridays in the Hall of Public Audience in the Gulbarga Fort. Carpets of silk of the highest value were spread and shāmiānās of cloth of gold erected in front of the hall. The king came and took his seat on the throne when the first eighth of the day had expired, and remained there till the call to midday prayers at about 1 p.m. The durbar was open to all and sundry without regard to the caste, creed, or religion of the darbārīs or suppliants.[3] This throne became the chief emblem of royalty and remained in the dynasty till the reign of Maḥmūd Shāh on the eve of the break-up of the empire, and he, out of sheer penury, had it broken up for the upkeep of the court![4]

The Great Mosque in the Gulbarga Fort testifies to the taste of the Second Bahmanī, during the latter part of whose reign it was erected.[5] As Mr. Yazdānī says, there is a cloister of wide-spanned arches which extends on three sides and presents interminable vistas on wide-spanned arches. Adjoining the cloisters are seven avenues of painted arches of exquisite proportions all leading to the main hall measuring 45 ft. each way. The avenues are divided north to south into twelve aisles by insertions of masonry columns which produce a labyrinthine effect in the

1. 'Iṣāmī, p. 549.
2. *Fir.*, I, 288.
3. *Fir.*, I, 282.
4. Maḥmūd succeeded Muḥammad III on 5-2-887/27-3-1482 and reigned till 4-12-924/7-12-1518.
5. *Fir.*, I, 288.

interior of the building.[1] √e may here point out that, unlike the usual Indian mosque, the whole building, occupying an area of 38,016 sq.ft., is entirely covered and is without any outside court-yard whatsoever. It is a unique building and testifies to the taste of the Second Bahmanī. There is no doubt that this innovation was due to the influx of foreign architects, especially Turkish, in whose homeland practically the whole area of the mosque is almost invariably covered.

In spite of these innovations the Tughluq tradition persisted in the famous Haft Gumbad or Seven Domes, as the tombs of the remaining Gulbarga sulṭāns are called, in the single domes, the bouquets on the top of four small minarets which are built over the angles of the square roofs, and even in the sloping walls, which had disappeared in the earlier Great Mosque but which reappear in the Shāh Bazār Mosque. The arch-ways of these tombs remind one of the arch-way of the 'Alā'ī Darwāzā at Delhi, built half a century earlier by 'Alā'ud-dīn Khiljī. It is noticeable how the purely Hindu hand appears for the first time in the prayer-niche in the western wall of Ghiyāthu'd-dīn's tomb, an influence which freely recurs in the tomb of Fīrōz Shāh, in which the jambs on the door-ways, the brackets, the chhajja, the double rows of arches, and the lotus leaves on the base of the dome remind one of the freedom given to the Hindu artisan which becomes so prominent in the architecture of the successive states, especially Bījāpūr and Gōlconda. Moreover in Fīrōz's tomb the slope in the walls completely disappears.[2]

Muḥammad Shāh's successor, Mujāhid, was well-versed in the Turkish and Persian languages as well as in the arts of war, and excelled in archery and wrestling.[3] In his days the art of war was being revolutionized by the development of artillery, and Ṣafdar Khān Sīstānī was appointed special officer in charge of the "fire rain" and was ordered to keep under his command special gun-carriages in the campaign against Vijayanagar. Firishta says that the cannon and fire-arms were used for the first time in the siege of Adōnī, where Muqarrab Khān commanded all "Levantines and the Franks" (رومیان وفرنگیان) who were in direct charge of the artillery, and this is the first time when we are told of the presence of Europeans in India. We hear of thirty thousand gunners and musketeers taking part in the battle, and two Bahmanī commanders, 'Īsā Khān and Mūsā Khān, were killed by musket shot.[4]

Mujāhid and Dāwūd were both murdered, and the latter was succeeded by the peace-loving Muḥammad Shāh II who has been dubbed the 'pioneer of the mediæval culture of the Deccan.'[5] His reign of nearly

1. Yazdani, *The Great Mosque of Gulbarga*, Islamic Culture, 1928.

2. Haft Gumbad—*Report of Hyderabad Arch. Dept.*, 1925-26, pp. 5-7; Shāh Bazar Mosque, p. 3.

3. *Fir.*, I, 296.

4. *Ibid.*, 290.

5. Siddiqi, A.M.: *Muḥammad Shāh II, the Pioneer of Mediæval Culture of the Deccan*, Ind. Hist. Cong., Hyderabad, 1941.

twenty years was marked by almost complete peace in the Deccan, and even the Vijayanagar border was quiet. Muḥammad was well-versed in Persian and Arabic and was a good calligraphist and a poet of some eminence, some of his lines being quoted by Firishta. He married only once, and was always happy to sit with the learned, some of whom he called from Persia and Arabia to the Deccan.[1] On his behalf Mīr Faḍlu'l-lāh Injū, the great savant of his time, summoned Khwājā Ḥāfiẓ of Shīrāz and sent him a considerable amount of money to defray his travelling and other expenses. Muḥammad Shāh had sent a special boat to fetch him to India, but as luck would have it, the sea began to heave when Ḥāfiẓ was entering the boat and he was so over-awed that he disembarked at once and composed the following tell-tale lines :

Not all the sum of earthly happiness
Is worth the bowed head of a moment's pain,
And if I sell for wine my dervish dress
Worth more than what I sell is what I gain.
Full easy seemed the sorrow of the sea
Lightened by hope of gain, hope flew too fast.
A hundred pearls were poor indemnity,
Not worth the blast.

The king was so impressed by the whole episode that he sent 1,000 golden tankas to the Khwājā as a recompense.[2]

Muḥammad used to wear costly dress when he was a prince but when he ascended the throne he was content to wear a simple garment, as he said that he was only a trustee appointed by God to serve his subjects. When a severe famine attacked the state, he purchased grain in the markets of Malwa and Gujrat in return for 10,000 head of cattle, and sold it cheaply in the bazars of the Deccan. He was the first sulṭān of the Deccan to appoint teachers for imparting education to the children in large towns such as Gulbarga, Bīdar, Qandhār, Junair, Chaul and Dābul, and supplemented this by the grant of scholarships and emoluments to scholars to encourage the study of sacred texts.[3]

With Muḥammad's death began the short interregnum which lasted seven months, ending in the accession of Fīrōz to the throne. Both Fīrōz and his successors were pupils of Mīr Faḍlu'l-lāh Injū who was later appointed Ṣadr Jahān, and the new king was well-versed in Qur'ānic studies, fiqh, natural and moral sciences, mathematics and geometry. Fīrōz himself lectured thrice a week to students on the standard texts of logic, rhetoric, the exegesis of the Qur'ān, and Ṣūfic precepts. He was also a poet of some mark, and had Urūjī and Fīrōzī as his poetic names.

1. *Fir.*, I, 301, 302.

2. Translation by Miss G. Bell, *Poems* of Ḥāfiẓ of Shīrāz, quoted by Browne, *Literary History of Persia*, 1265-1502. Ḥāfiẓ died in 791/1389.

3. *Fir.*, I, 302.

Naturally such a sulṭān would be a great patron of learning and he sent ships "in all directions" every year not only for trading purposes but also to bring scholars and the greatest men to the Deccan.[1] Thus was unconsciously laid the great problem of the "New-Comers" and the "Old-Comers," which finally caused the disruption of the sultanate itself. But naturally Fīrōz had no intention of creating such an incurable wound, and what he wanted, as he said, was to get the most experienced men from far and near for the service of the kingdom. He used to say that he was a king when actually on the throne, but was like an ordinary man otherwise, and he acted according to this novel yet correct idea in being absolutely free with learned men, poets and story-tellers part of the evening, on the solitary condition that no conversation on politics would be allowed in these convivial meetings.[2] Although he led a number of campaigns against Vijayanagar he was perhaps inclined towards a truce with the Hindu states, as is evidenced by his leaving Khērlā in Narsingh's possession and marrying into the family of the rāya of Vijayanagar, a marriage which was celebrated with great pomp in the capital of the Hindu empire, and again by marrying his son Ḥasan Khān to the famous beauty of the Deccan, Parthāl of Mudgal.

It was in the reign of the Fīrōz's successor Shihābu'd-dīn Aḥmad I, that the capital was moved from Gulbarga to Bīdar and the Great Fort built which is still the glory of the Deccan, and the excavations of which have brought to light some of the most wonderful buildings the Deccan possesses. After passing through the Sharza Darwāzā built by Aurangzīb nearly two hundred and fifty years later, we pass through another gateway and then come to the Gumbad Darwāzā with its stilted arch, which was the favourite of the Bahmanīs. We wander through the vast enclosure with massive walls, the most partly dug out of solid rock, to Rangīn Maḥal, built almost entirely in the traditional Hindū fashion, the Solha Khamb Masjid, the recently discovered inscription of which shows that it was built in 1424, the Dīwan-i'Ām and the Dīwān-i Khāṣ, and finally the Takht Maḥal and the Baths with beautiful tile decorations and the Persian emblem of the Lion and the Rising Sun in bold glazed tiles on the top of the stilt.[3] It was this part of the palace which the poet Atharī, author of the *Bahman Nāma*, praised in his now famous lines :—

> 'What grandeur ! What strength ! that the very sky appears but the top of the foundation of the edifice ;
>
> And even this comparison is improper, for we must remember that we have in our mind the palace of the king of the world, Aḥmad Bahman Shāh.[4]

1. *Fir.*, I, 306-308.
2. *Fir.*, I, 306.
3. Reports of *Hyderabad Arch. Dept.*, 1928-29, 1929-30, 1930-31, 1931-33, 1933-34, 1934-35.
4. Atharī, 734/1383—866/1462, author of *Bahman Nāma*, which exists no more as a separate work but which is utilised freely by *Fir.* See *Fir.*, I, 325, 326.

The stilting of the arches, of which the Bahmanīs were so fond, shows considerable Persian influence, but this is not unmixed with Hindu art which abounds in the fort in the carvings of marginal borders and many other appliances. Here it may be pointed out that the stilted Bahmanī arch is seen to advantage in many buildings in Vijayanagar, the greatest enemy of the Bahmanīs, which was, however, much taken by the architectural *motif* at Bīdar—*e.g.*, the gateway on the Talarigattu road, domed gateway on the east of Hampi, the watch-towers of the Zenana Enclosures, the Elephant Stables, the watch-tower in the Danāik's enclosure and many other ruins of Hampi.[1]

We are now nearing the period which was enriched by the presence of Maḥmūd Gāwān, the great Bahmanī Wazīr, and with him the culture of the Deccan reached its apex. Maḥmūd Gāwān arrived at Bīdar in the reign of Aḥmad I's son 'Alā'ud-dīn Aḥmad II at the ripe age of 42 and lived at Bīdar throughout the reigns of Humāyūn, unjustly surnamed the Cruel, Niẓāmu'd-dīn Aḥmad III, and Muḥammad III. He was a great upholder of culture and his famous Madrasah at Bīdar is the most prominent monument of the city. It is visible for miles around, and its tower is definitely the loftiest tower in the town. The Madrasah was built in 1472, nine years before the martyrdom of its founder, and is a permanent symbol of the Khwājā's concern for the public welfare, while he himself was nowhere more at home than in its libraries and lecture-halls. The verse of the Qur'ān :

> " Peace be on you that are good,
> So enter it for ever,"

which still adorns the main gate, beckoned every one to come and partake of the intellectual food provided there. The building was damaged by an explosion during the reign of Aurangzīb in 1696 and more than a quarter of it was destroyed, but in spite of this damage it is still the glory of the Deccan and an example of the " beautiful Persian architecture in glazed tile developed under the later Mongols." It is said that the present most acceptable to the Khwājā was that of books, which he invariably presented to the library of this great college.[2]

Maḥmūd Gāwān was a writer of no mean merit, and the collection of his letters named the *Riyāḍu'l-Inshā* has the distinction of being the earliest existing Persian work compiled in the Deccan. The 145 letters included in the work are addressed to kings, queens, princes, princesses, ministers, men of learning, men of religion, men of literature and others, and throw a powerful light on the man and his contemporaries. To many men of learning he extends his invitation to come to Bīdar and lecture before the pupils of his foundation. Among such was the great philosopher and writer Khwāja Jalālu'd-dīn Dawānī, who dedicated to the

1. Illustrations in A.H. Longhurst, *Hampi Ruins*, Delhi, 1933.

2. The Madrasah at Bīdar, see *Maḥmūd Gāwān, op. cit.*, pp. 143-145. The quotation is from Goetz : *Indo-Muslim Architecture in its Islamic setting.* Journal of the University of Bombay, January 1940.

Wazīr his book the *Shawākilu'l-Ḥūr*, a commentary on Shaikh Shihābuddīn Suhurwardi's *Hayākilu'n-Nūr*. We have eight letters addressed to Maulānā Nūru'd-dīn Jāmī, "the acknowledged leader of the learned of the epoch," in which, among other things, the Khwājā invites the Maulānā to come to Bīdar.[1] On the other hand Jāmī reciprocates the honour done to him by a couple of odes, one in Persian and the other in Arabic in which he lavishes upon the Wazīr unbounded praises and the highest honour, and expresses the wish that the "shadow of the Khwājā-i Jahān may continue on his forehead." The Khwājā is likewise extolled by 'Abdu'r-Razzāq, the famous ambassador of the sulṭān of Hirāt to the court of Vijayanagar, who includes him among the world-famous alumni of Gilan, and by Sakhāwī, who regards him as one of the luminaries of the 9th century.[2]

Maḥmūd Gāwān was like the last and strong flicker of life before the death-pangs of the Bahmanī kingdom, which set in immediately after his death. √ith the virtual disappearance of the Bahmanī state and its disruption into five successive states the Bahmanī culture also came to an end, giving place to the three chief composite cultures of Aḥmadnagar, Bijāpūr and Golconda.

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1. See Sherwani : *Riyāḍu'l-Insha as the source book of Deccan History*, Indian Historial Records Commission, Baroda, 1941, p. 170. Shaikh Shihābu'd-dīn Suhurwardi was the ancestor of H.E.H. the Nizam of Hyderabad and Berar : See Yūsuf Ḥusain Khān *Niẓāmu'l Mulk Āṣaf Jāh I*, 1936.

2. See *Proceedings of the Hyderabad Archæological and Historical Society*, 1st meeting, 10-8-1941.